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AUTHOR Chesney-Lind: Meda
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ABSTRACT

The document describes research on womens' attitudes toward abortion and their decision-making when pregnant leading to either birth or abortion. The objective was "to explore how womens' perceptions of the option of legal abortion have affected their pregnancy decision-making behavior" and to note the impact of their particular choices on their attitudes toward abortion. Interviews were held with 172 pregnant women in Hawaii facing the decision of birth or abortion. Information was solicited about their life situation: attitudes toward contraception, drugs, sexuality, women's roles, motherhood, and abortion: sexual activity: and pregnancy history. They were also asked about the sequence of events after the discovery of pregnancy and details of decision-making determining either birth or abortion. Findings included that decisions for or against abortion were based largely on the woman's situation, social support, and social class: that the definition of the situation revolved around pregnancy planning and orientation toward marriage and/or motherhood: that the attitudes of those who chose abortion were positive: and that the more deviant the woman's situation in light of norms condemning unwed motherhood, the more intense her negative attitude toward abortion. The conclusion is that legal abortion has made a dramatic impact on female pregnancy decision-making in that the option has restructured the traditional system for responding to unplanned pregnancy. (CK)

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Protest Motherhood:

Pregnancy Decision-Making Behavior and Attitudes Towards Abortion

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by

Meda Chesney-Lind

Department of Sociology
Honolulu Community College
University of Hawaii

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For most of human history, womankind had no choice about pregnancy. Patriarchial societies, concerned about guaranteeing an adequate number of male progeny, elaborated on this biological reality by encouraging women to define motherhood as their chief source of fulfillment and self-esteem (Bernard, 1974; Rich, 1976). Throughout the centuries, the absense of other societally approved social roles plus the inevitablity of motherhood encouraged women to organize their lives around their anatomy and to accomodate themselves to a life of childbearing and rearing (Blake, 1974).

Today, legal abortion offers the possibility of re-defining the proper role of womankind by allowing pregnant women to chose whether or not to enter the motherhood role. The intent of this paper is to explore how, in real life, women's preceptions of the option of legal abortion have affected their pregnacy decision-making behavior. Also of interest is the impact of particular choices for and against entry into the motherhood role on general attitudes about the option of abortion.

Surprisingly, little is known about how women feel when finding themselves in a situation where they might employ abortion. In contrast, much is known about the attitudes of the general public toward abortion. Public opinion polls reveal that a growing majority of Americans appear to support the Supreme Court Decision of 1973 which made abortion available to women (Family Planning Perspectives, 1979; NARAL Newsletter 1979). Unfortunately, results of these one item polls are quite susceptible to slight variations in wording (Blake, 1973). Many researchers have turned to an alternate technique which presents respondents with a series of situations in which a woman is confronting an unplanned pregnancy.

In general, once repsondents are presented with these enumerated situations, acceptance of abortion drops off dramatically. 80 percent of the

public approve of abortion in such situations where the woman's health is "seriously endangered", where she has become pregnant as a "result of a rape", or where there is a strong chance that the baby will have a"serious defect", but less than half support abortion for women who are "unmarried and do not want to marry the man" or"married and do not want to have any more children". About half of all Americans, however, favor abortion if the "family" is very poor and cannot afford any more children (Arney and Trescher, 1976: 118).

There are, of course, significant differences in the degree of support for elective abortion found in different segments of the population. Multi-variate analysis (Wagenaar, 1977) of the effect of a number of demographic variables on attitudes show that the support for abortion is highest among those who are "white, never married or higher socio-economic status, with no religious affiliation, seldom attend church, live in the Northeast or West, or have lower exposure to children" (Wagenaar, 1977: 927). The most salient of these variables, according to Wagenaar, are religion and socio-economic status.

Other research (Westoff, 1977; Arney and Trescher, 1976) confirms the importance of religion in predicting attitudes toward abortion and adds information which indicates that this variable is of increasing importance. Support for elective abortion can also be affected by education, particularly the education of the woman (Bogen, 1974; Westoff, 1977), though this difference appears to be eroding as people with less education move to a more liberal position (Arney and Trescher, 1979; 123).

Another interesting trend among women is the slight decrese in support of abortion among young unmarried people (Wagenaar, 1977; Blake, 1974). Further exploration of this pattern reveals that teenaged women "appear to

be somewhat more conservative in their attitudes toward abortion than adults" (Zelnik and Kantner, 1975: 91) with this being particularly true among younger, sexually in-experienced teenagers. The experience of a "pregnancy scare" or abortion, on the other hand, clearly affects the degree women's support for the option of abortion (Bogen, 1974; Evans, Selstad, and Welcher, 1976; Bracken, Klerman, and Bracken, 1978).

Finally, it appears that there has been a slight decrease in support for abortion among men and a corresponding increase in support for abortion among women (Wagenaar, 1977: 934). Some suspect that this decline in male support is a product of a male backlash against the women's rights movement. Support for the contention that opposition to abortion may be related to hostility to the women's movement is also provided by Granberg's research (1978). Analyzing national survey data, he found correlations between opposition to abortion and conservative politics, opposition to women's liberation, and a conservative approach to personal morality and concluded that "the notion that opposition to abortion represents a more generalized pro-life orientation received no support". (Granberg, 1977: 414)

But what is the relationship between these general public attitudes and actual abortion seeking behavior? Married women who profess quite liberal attitudes toward abortion as a public issue expect, of themselves, a more traditional mode of behavior (Westhoff, 1977; 177). Also research on the impact of religion on abortion seeking behavior found that Catholic women did tend to use abortion less frequently than their non-Catholic counterparts (Leon and Steinhoff, 1975). Is this finding indicative of the influence of negative attitudes toward the morality of abortion or more subtle differences between the life situations of women who give birth and their counterparts who seek abortion? How, then, do generalized attitudes toward the

acceptability of abortion figure in real life situations where pregnant women must decide whether to enter the motherhood role or to seek an elective abortion and avoid that transition.

This paper summarizes the results of in-depth interviews conducted with 172 women who, in the era of legal abortion, were confronting this decision. The women were interviewed at the hospital either after birth or abortion. The interview solicited information on the woman's life situation, her attitudes toward contraception, drugs, sexuality, women's roles, motherhood, and abortion. She was also asked the details of her own sexual activity and pregnancy history.

With regard to the pregnancy which brought her to the hospital, the woman was asked to discuss the sequence of events after she discovered she was pregnant and the details of the decision-making process which determined her particular outcome (either birth or abortion). Because these interviews were conducted as part of a much larger research project, it was also possible to place the interview respondents demographically within the total population of women who became pregnant and chose either birth or abortion during roughly the same period of time that the interviews were conducted.*

Slightly less than half (45 percent) of all women who became pregnant during July and August of 1971 in Hawaii were childless. Among the parity decisions, the choice to have a first child is admittedly the most

*The HPECA Study collected demographic data on all births and abortions in the state and used these to construct "conception cohorts" (No 3, 187) which a profile of women who became pregnant during a particular two month period. Questionnaire data, which provided additional information on the woman's situation, were then weighted to properly reflect the characteristics of the population. These weighted data supply the demographic background for these interviews.

sociologically significant as it signals a major, if not the major, life transition for women (Presser, 1971; Lopata, 1971). Of those women who faced this motherhood decision in the HPBCA's conception cohort, roughly half (45 percent) had planned to become pregnant. Almost all (98 percent) of these planned pregnancies were carried to term in contrast to only about half of the unplanned pregnancies (57 percent). That is, nearly a quarter of the women who found themselves confronting the motherhood decision elected to avoid that role transition and seek an abortion.

These data, however, tell little of how that particular decision was made and what role the woman's perceptions about the morality or acceptability of abortion played in their behavior. For this information, reference must be made to the interviews with a sample of these women who made this decision in the era of legal abortion.

INTENTIONAL MOTHERHOOD AND ATTITUDES TOWARD ABORTION

Women experiencing pregnancies they labelled as "planned" were more likely than their counterparts who faced an unexpected pregnancy to be married (97.9 percent compared to 56.4 percent), older (34.5 percent aged 25-30 compared to 15.8 percent), and in non-student occupational roles (see Table One). Indeed, housewives and professional women were four times more likely than students to be experiencing a planned pregnancy.

The differences between women experiencing planned and unplanned pregnancies notwithstanding, there are also major and significant differences within this group of women who label as "planned" their entry into motherhood. One group, largely middle class professional women, have postponed the birth of their first child after marriage until they and their husbands felt "ready" to start a family. Another group of women had been married only a short time when they became pregnant. Their husbands were largely working class (semi-skilled or unskilled laborers) and most identified themselves as Catholic. These women tended to identify marriage and motherhood as roles one enters simultaneously.

Though none of these women considered abortion in their immediate pregnancies, these two different orientations towards the motherhood role did have a major impact on their attitudes towards the general acceptability of abortion.

Women who delayed entry into the motherhood role by continuing to use effective contraception after marriage tended to have a very positive attitude toward abortion. At the time of the birth of their child, 81 percent of them said they supported Hawaii's abortion law (which was the first in the nation to permit abortion essentially at the request of the pregnant woman). (See Table Two)

Table One: Percentage of Women Reporting a Planned Pregnancy by Selected Variables.

Characteristic		Percent Reporting Planned Pregnancy	Total Number (Base)*
Marital Status at Conception	Single	10	74
	Going Steady	8	101
	Living Together	19	42
	Engaged	23	26
	Married	73	426
	Separated/Divorced	17	6
Age	Less than 15	8	13
	15-19	31	205
	20-24	55	308
	25-29	67	129
	30 or more	77	30
Annual Income	Less than $6,000	41	191
	$6,000-$9,999	60	158
	$10,000-$14,999	54	128
	$15,000 or more	59	123 (600)
Social Class**	High	56	143
	Middle	54	437
	Low	30	53 (639)
Ethnicity	Caucasian	51	314
	Filipino	53	59
	Part-Hawaiian	40	48
	Japanese	54	132
	Other	47	131 (684)
Religion	Buddhist	51	51
	Catholic	51	212
	Protestant	55	295
	None	36	87
	Other	46	22 (667)
Women's Occupation	Professional	65	161
	Sales and Clerical	56	175
	Service	37	43
	Housewife	60	136
	Student	17	103 (618)
Age by Education	14 or less some school	8	13
	15-19 some school	31	48
	15-19 high school graduate	36	98
	15-19 some college	22	45
	20-24 some school	83	17
	20-24 high school graduate	63	103
	20-24 some college	49	126
	20-24 college graduate	52	68
	25+ high school	64	42
	25+ some college	53	30
	25+ College graduate	58	73 (669)
TOTAL		47	605

*The totals vary because of missing data in the conception cohort.

**Occupations of the woman's father or husband were given census codes. These codes were then assigned to the Hollingshead classification categories. These were then placed into three broad categories: high (levels 1, 2, and 3), middle (levels 4 and 5), and low (levels 6 and 7).

Table Two: Attitudes Toward Abortion Among Women in Interview Sample Choosing Motherhood

Attitude Toward Abortion Law	Type of Motherhood				
	Planned		Unplanned		
	Deliberate N=16	Drift N=11	Timing Failure N=7	Forced Marriage N=9	Single N=17
When Passed					
For	69%	20	71	44	24
Against	18	60	29	22	41
Ambivalent	7	20	0	33	35
At Time of Interview					
For	81	20	71	33	29
Against	13	30	29	22	35
Ambivalent	7	50	0	44	35
	100 (16)*	100 (10)	100 (7)	100 (9)	100 (16)

*Totals vary because of missing data.

Table Three: Advice to Women in Unplanned Pregnancy Situation by Women Chosing Motherhood

Types of Situations	Type of Motherhood				
	Planned		Unplanned		
	Deliberate	Drift	Timing Failure	Forced Marriage	Single
Married woman who "felt she had enough children already"	N=16	N=11	N=7	N=9	N=17
Have Abortion	38%	10%	29%	11%	13%
Keep Baby	19	50	29	33	44
Mixed Advice	44	40	43	57	44
"not ready to begin her family yet"					
Have Abortion	19	10	0	22	0
Keep Baby	38	50	43	33	44
Mixed Advice	44	40	57	44	56
Unmarried woman who was "going steady with someone"					
Have Abortion	38	10	14	11	0
Keep Baby	19	70	57	57	50
Mixed Advice	44	20	29	33	50
"would not marry the man who got her pregnant"					
Have Abortion	44	20	14	11	13
Keep Baby	19	60	57	44	44
Mixed Advice	39	20	29	44	44
"was still in high school"					
Have Abortion	50	10	29	11	19
Keep Baby	25	50	29	44	50
Mixed Advice	25	40	43	44	31
	100 (16)*	100 (10)	100 (7)	100 (9)	100 (16)

*Totals vary because of missing data.

This signalled a significant change from their attitudes at the time the law was originally passed (March 1970). Only 69 percent of the respondents said they had supported the law at that time.

With regard to their specific comments, virtually all volunteered that they felt the law was a "good thing": "I'm glad it passed," "I think it's fine," and "I supported it" were typical comments.

Several were even more explicit in their support. Three indicated that they had participated in the campaigning to repeal Hawaii's restrictive law and felt the law should be even less restrictive. One woman summed up the position of this group by saying: "I'm pro-repeal . . . abortion is a constructive thing in many cases . . . we'd have compulsory pregnancy without it."

Most of these women know women who had had abortions and one had had one herself. Her account of an illegal abortion in Puerto Rico was vivid but not traumatic:

> It was a referral from a friend . . . I went to a doctor and he inserted a catheter in his office . . . I was sent home to have the baby . . . he advised me to come back for a D and C but I never did. He offered to give me more service and said he would only charge what I could afford . . . he didn't go into a big coercive thing.

Her experience, however, propelled this twenty-seven year old social worker into active participation in the campaign to repeal Hawaii's restrictive abortion law. Her comment about the law was that "It was a good first step . . . although the technicalities will have to be worked out."

These women were also asked what advice they would give to women who became unexpectedly pregnant in a series of situations:

1) a married woman who "felt she had enough children"
2) a married woman who was "not ready to begin her family yet"
3) a woman who was unmarried but "going steady with someone"
4) a woman who was unmarried and "would not marry the man who got her pregnant"
5) a woman who was "still in high school"

Generally, those interviewed had little problem advising abortion for an unexpected pregnancy. As a twenty seven year old secretary put it, "Everybody should plan their families rather than having one child after another."

The degree of support and the quality of advice did vary, however, depending on the specifics of the situation./ (See Table Three) For a married woman their support for abortion was relatively high if the woman felt she had enough children (38 percent) but sharply less support for this option if the woman had no child (19 percent).

For unmarried women, 40 percent said they would recommend abortion. As one woman put it, "If a woman is unmarried and she doesn't want the kid she should have an abortion. If she wants the kid she should ask herself, if she could give it the emotional support it needed." For an unmarried woman who was still in high school, half of these women would recommend abortion. Many of those who did not specifically recommend abortion said they would advise the woman to make up her own mind ("She should do what's best for her. Does she want the baby or not." "I would help her look at alternatives").

For middle class women who postpone motherhood after marriage, then, a positive view of both motherhood and abortion is evident. Possibly because they postponed entry into motherhood, they have developed other sources of self-esteem and no longer regard it as their most important characteristic. As a consequence, they have little difficulty with abortion. Motherhood, for them, is a role one decides and plans to enter.

This positive and open attitude toward abortion was not found among the second group of women with planned pregnancies. This group consisted of women who drifted into motherhood shortly after marriage or who, in a few cases, used their pregnancies to precipitate marriage. They had not been

using contraception after marriage because they had wanted to become pregnant as soon as possible. For them, motherhood was a major motivation for marriage, and they anticipated that it would become the central focus of their lives.

Predictably, these less deliberate women were not very accepting of Hawaii's abortion law, Table Two shows 20 percent saying they were in favor of it. However, they had moved from outright opposition to ambivalence about the law. At the time the law was passed, 60 percent said they were against it, but at the time of the interview only about a third (30 percent) held this position. Fully half (50 percent) said they now had mixed feelings (compared to about a fifth at the time of the law's passage).

Perhaps this shift is best summarized by one comments of a twenty year old mechanic's wife who said "I thought the law was terrible, but after they passed it . . . well now it puts the whole burden on the woman. She has to live with it. I think its more torturing but its part of our rights." Others were similarly ambivalent; a twenty two year old housewife saying, "I'm not in favor of abortion but you've got to do something. There are so many babies born," and finally one twenty year old bank clerk who said, "About abortion, its personal. It makes me sick but that person . . . it's affecting her. She shouldn't have to suffer. I wouldn't want to [have an abortion] unless I had the measles or something and had to."

Some of these women were more hostile to the idea, however, since it violated their notion that motherhood should be viewed as a unique and pre-emptive status: "I can't see abortion unless there is a real good reason . . . too many people can't have babies." A twenty year old office clerk echoed this sentiment, "Women who have abortions don't want babies . . . I dont' feel abortion is right and I would never have one unless I was raped."

Several women expressed another side of this traditional orientation

to motherhood by saying that one should not engage in sexual intercourse unless one wanted to become pregnant: "Why do it if you don't want children." Another added that while she felt the law "Might promote a bit of promiscuity," she still thought "The majority will need it."

Only one of these women hand undergone a previous illegal abortion performed in Mexico and her experience had softened her attitudes toward abortion:

> They take you out backwards, blindfolded to the car. Everyone was really cold, evil. I didn't want it after I got there. I had never thought of evil before . . . but they felt evil . . . the nurses or whatever they were . . . and a man . . . a doctor . . . he was not as bad as the women.

Her reaction to the abortion was to say that it was "not a good idea . . . I wouldn't do it again but for some people in some situations you're doing the baby a favor." A similar pattern was discovered by Bracken, Klerman and Bracken (1978) in their study of pregnancy decision-making and attitudes toward abortion among single women in New Haven;

> Very sharp differences were found between women aborting and those delivering on their attitudes toward abortion. The ethical aspect of abortion (abortion as killing) moreover, was one of the strongest differences between the two groups. This is not to say, however, that whether a woman decides upon abortion will follow from her attitude about it. Women currently delivering but who had previously aborted held attitudes similar to those of women curently aborting. Attitudes toward abortion are changed by one's experience of it. (Bracken, Klerman, and Bracken, 1978: 261)

With the exception of this women, however, none of these women indicated that they had ever considered abortion personally nor was the idea of abortion suggested by anyone in their social network. Their essentially negative comments seemed instead to come from a more general feeling that abortion represented a violation of their view of motherhood as the central and

pre-emptive female role. Thus, when presented with the same series of situations as their more deliberate counterparts, the importance of this orientation was clear. These women routinely suggested that the girl or women who found themselves unexpectedly pregnant change their life goals to accomodate the birth.

Surprising, too, was the lack of variability in their responses. Unlike their more deliberate counterparts, changes in the woman's objective situation did little to affect their advice. (see Table Three) While the women who deliberately planned to be pregnant tended to shift towards approval of abortion toward the end of the scale (where the woman's objective situation was more extreme) these women consistently avoided recommending abortion with about half (50 percent to 70 percent) counseling motherhood in all circumstances. One young woman, married to a janitor, was quite firm about her advice: "I will tell them to continue to have the baby. No abortion. I'm against abortion because of my religion. You should have self control". Another was less loquacious. In response to the question about what she would advise a married woman who as "not ready" to begin her family, she said shortly, "get ready."

It is clear that no single variable (such as religious preference) can explain this orientation. In essence, the lack of genuine options to motherhood for working and lower class women combined with a more traditional sex role socialization, (Hartley, 1964; Kohn, 1959; Rabban, 1950) and sex segregated relationsnips with their husbands (Rainwater, 1965) push them into the view of motherhood as the major source of feminine fulfillment. Ironically, this orientation encourages fertility patterns that ultimately penalize the family and the woman (Coombs and Freedman, 1970). Their view of motherhood certainlymakes the idea of abortion less appealing. However, they did not or were not encouraged by others to consider abortion in their own pregnancies and, perhaps because of this distance, they have moved from outright opposition to a slightly more ambivalent stance about the option.

UNEXPECTED MOTHERHOOD AND THE REJECTION OF ABORTION

Of the childless women in the Hawaii Pregnancy, Birth Control and Abortion Study's third conception cohort, slightly under half found themselves unexpectedly pregnant and slightly more than half (56 percent) carried these pregnancies to term. While this proportion seems substantial, it is significantly lower than the corresponding proportion for other parity groups.*

Overall, the comparison of respondent's experiencing an unplanned pregnancy (see Table Four) shows that, the woman's sex role characteristics (marital status, occupation, and age) reveal clear differences between those who carry the pregnancy to term and those who seek abortion. Women who are students, who are unmarried, and who are between ages of twenty and thirty are more likely to resolve their unplanned pregnancies by abortion than women who are married, housewives or clerical workers, and under twenty. The failure of women who label themselves as "living with" or "engaged" to carry their pregnancies to term as frequently as did women who said they were "going steady" is, however, somewhat puzzling.

Less surprising are the differences that emerge on the basis, of ethnicity, religion and social class. These point to the possible existence of cultural norms which may be affecting decisions about an unplanned first pregnancy especially for women at certain points in their life cycle.

* Women facing a second birth, for example, do not experience a significantly higher percentage of planned conceptions (51 percent of all second pregnancies were planned); but a much higher percent (82 percent) of these women carry their unplanned pregnancies to term.

Table Four: Percentage of Childless Women Carrying Unplanned Pregnancy To Term by Selected Variables

Variables		Percentage of Cohort Giving Birth	Total Number (Base)*
Marital Status at Conception	Single	38	67
	Going Steady	48	93
	Living with Man	36	21
	Engaged	38	40
	Married	87	115
	Sep/Div/Wid	39	5 (341)
Age	Less than 15	34	12
	15-19	61	141
	20-24	54	138
	25-29	56	43
	30+	72	7
Income	Less than $6,000	63	113
	$6,000-$9,999	51	64
	$10,000-$14,999	59	59
	$15,000 or more	54	50 (285)
Social Class	High	47	66
	Middle	57	203
	Low	64	37 (306)
Ethnicity	Caucasion	48	154
	Filipino	80	28
	Part-Hawaiian	75	29
	Japanese	44	61
	Other	71	69
Religion	Buddhist	68	25
	Catholic	70	113
	Protestant	52	134
	None	41	56
	Other	49	12
Woman's Occupation	Professional	49	56
	Sales and Clerical	67	77
	Service	44	29
	Housewife	90	54
	Student	35	86 (302)
Age by Education	14 or less some school	34	22
	15-19 some school	68	32
	15-19 high school graduate	71	62
	15-19 some college	41	42
	20-24 some school	100	3
	20-24 high school graduate	81	38
	20-24 some college	46	64
	20-24 college graduate	33	33
	25+ high school	61	15
	25+ some college	71	17
	25+ college graduate	42	17 (337)
TOTAL		60	341

*The totals vary because of missing data in the conception cohort.

Married Women and Unexpected Pregnancy

About half (52 percent) of the women who carried unplanned first pregnancies to term were married at the time of conception and delivery. Interviews with these women reveal that demographically, they are not unlike women who planned to enter the motherhood role. They are older than their unmarried counterparts who are experiencing unplanned pregnancy, most had been married for two years or more, and most were working at the time they became pregnant. Finally, there were likely to be married to middle class men.

Unlike their sisters who planned their entry into motherhood, these women were in couples where either one or both of them were ambivalent or negative about the pregnancy. Why, then, did they not consider abortions as a resolution of this situation?

In general, these interviews provide two answers to this question. First, there was evidence that unplanned pregnancy may have been instrumental for some of these women. It appeared that they might have deliberately failed to use contraception effectively in the hope that they would become pregnant. This ploy seems to have been successful. One woman, reported that when she told her husband she was pregnant "He wanted an abortion." but she said, "Now he's happy." In another case, the husband disagreed strongly with the pregnancy but the wife hoped that the baby "will bring the marriage alot closer."

In other pregnancies, both husband and wife were ambivalent about the pregnancy and in these cases another factor appeared. Essentially, there is strong cultural pressure on married couples to accomodate pregnancy, planned or not, and this is particularly true of the first pregnancy (Kammeyer, 1971; Peck and Senderowitz, 1974).

Consequently, after discovery of the pregnancy couples tended to reconcile themselves to the idea of parenthood. The pregnancy of a thirty year old educator shows this drift toward a positive definition. Answering a question about the options she considered after she discovered she was pregnant, she said she had thought about "Having the baby and giving it up . . . but not for two seconds really." She gradually became adjusted to the pregnancy, and said the baby would make her feel more like a member of her husband's family.

Apparently, while most disagreements about the pregnancy had been resolved by the birth of the child, there was some tendency for women who were, themselves, reluctant about the pregnancy to be slightly less enthusiastic about their relationships with their husbands. This was probably the result of the strain produced by the pregnancy. One of these women said, in response to an interviewer probe, that she wished she could become "Less moody . . . easier on men."

Not even these women seriously considered abortion, however, and the question remains, why? It was not, as one might assume, a general rejection of that as an option. Almost three quarters of the women interviewed (71 percent) supported Hawaii's abortion law both at passage and delivery, saying things like "It's good to have legalized abortion," "It's great!" (See Table Two)

These women were, however, less accepting of abortion in specific situations. Although over a quarter advised it in the case of a married woman with enough children or a high school student's pregnancy, none felt it was appropriate in their own situation. The women essentially fell into two groups with some who were more traditional in their orientation toward motherhood expressing negative attitudes toward abortion in situations like their own: "I wouldn't advise abortion . . . if you can have sex you can

take care of a baby." "Ask her to let me adopt the baby." Another group, with less traditional view of motherhood, were reluctant to give advise. "I wouldn't give advice even if it was a close friend." "She should talk to her doctor," said a twenty three year old computer programmer and another simply said, "I don't like giving advice." Finally, one twenty eight year said old woman, "If [she] feels [she] could handle the kid, [she should] have it, she will probably change her mind when the child comes."

This comment explains much about this group's behavior. Essentially, married couples experience great difficulty in avoiding pronatalist norms which suggest that if there are no over-riding situational factors against childbearing, the pregnancy should be carried to term.

The socialization for parenthood generally means that at least one of the two parents welcomes the idea of unplanned birth, and from the interview comments, the relatives are uniformly happy about the news. Consequently, almost 90 percent of the married women who experienced an unplanned pregnancy to carry them to term. Indeed, as this paper will show the very few married women who sought abortion did so only because of extreme circumstances.

Essentially, there is little social support for the partner who wishes to postpone childbearing. There simply are few acceptable reasons for a married couple not to have a child given the prevailing pronatalist norms about the value of childbearing. These women, then, carry their pregnancies to term not because they oppose abortion but because the social pressure for childbearing is enormous. Accomodation to unplanned marital pregnancy did mean that they found it difficult to advise others to seek abortions for their unplanned pregnancies. Perhaps because of their own implicit commitment to planned parenthood, however, many still favored abortion in general. Essentially, these women labelled as "unplanned" pregnancies that other

married women, with a more traditional orientation toward motherhood, labelled as planned. This explains why they were generally more accepting of abortion than women who drifted quickly into parenthood after marriage.

Forced Marriage and The Rejection of Abortion

Research on couples who marry because of a pre-marital pregnancy indicates that these couples are at a substantial economic and educational dis-advantage at various stages of married life despite the fact that they do not start in a "disadvantageous position" (Coombs, et al., 1970: 805). Yet, despite the option of legal abortion, a substantial number of women in this sample who became unexpectedly pregnant resolved their situation by a rapid marriage rather than abortion. About half (51 percent) of the women who carried unplanned pregnancies to term were married at conception, but nearly three-quarters (72 percent) reported that they were married at the time of delivery. Pregnancy clearly meant marriage for some of these women. Of obvious interest to all, then, would be the reasons for this costly choice after legal abortion became available.

The women in this sample who chose forced marriage tended to be young women who married working class men to resolve their pregnancies. Most were either working at traditional women's jobs (clerical or sales work) or were housewives at the time of their child's birth and about half were Catholic. Despite the existence of legal abortion, these women consistently reported that they did not consider abortion after discovery of their pregnancy. This was not true, however, of their entire decision-making network.

When directly asked what options they had considered when they discovered that they were pregnant (marriage, having the baby and keeping it, adoption, abortion or suicide), their comments clearly indicated that they had rejected abortion ("Abortion was not considered, we were planning to get married," "I wouldn't consider abortion," or "I only thought of keeping the baby and getting married.") Two of the ten did say that others suggested

abortion, but they angrily rejected this idea. "His mother wanted me to have an abortion. I could have really let loose but I wouldn't . . . she just wants to keep her little boy," said a nineteen year old student. Others were less explicit, but many expressed fear that their parents or their boyfriends would want them to have an abortion. While none of these women said that they had considered abotion, there was some indication that a few of them might have sought it had their boyfriends not married them. One said for example, that she made up her mind about what to do regarding her pregnancy "as soon as I knew we were getting married."

This uncertainty did, however, affect their general attitudes about the option of abortion. While nearly half (44 percent) said they supported Hawaii's abortion law when it was past, at the time of their interview only (See Table Two, p.8) a third support it. One woman said, for example, "I was for it but now I think its too liberal." Their comments range from ambivalence ("I never made up my mind," or "its good and bad but alright in certain circumstances," "I think its good but not for me," or "I haven't thought much about it really") to outright hostility, "They shouldn't have passed it -- /I'm/ against it." Interesting too is the fact that, for the first time, emotional phraseology which signals the humanity of the fetus appears. One twenty one year old Japanese housewife said that the decision for abortion was "up to the parents of the unborn child," another said that a pregnant woman's unmarried status is "no reason to stop a baby's life," and a third said, "I don't know how a woman can have an abortion, it is a life and I wouldn't want to destroy it". Only one of these three was a Catholic. Finally, all but one of these women expressed consistent and unvarying opposition to abortion in the six specific situations with most advising the woman to "keep the baby" or "get married." Said one woman "Most would think about

getting married at the same time they had sex," and another said, "she should have thought about it before. It always works out." (See Table Three, p. 9)

In essence, women who sought marriage as a solution to unplanned pregnancy seemed very like their working class counterparts who drifted into family building soon after marriage. Careless about contraception because they expected to get married, these women defined their pregnancy as "moving up" the date of their wedding. Some were concerned that they were not ready for the responsibilities of motherhood, but they hoped that the experience of pregnancy and birth would provide them with the maturity to handle the new role.

For these working class women, the transition to wife and mother is, if not a welcome one, then at least a well travelled one. There are few barriers to marriage and the women find themselves in occupational roles which encourage the notion that wifehood and motherhood are the major sources of social fulfillment. Their boyfriends are ofen less enthusiastic about the idea of marriage, but they too see no reason for avoiding marriage. They are working rather than studying so why not get married. Drift into marriage has always been a familiar and socially acceptable phenomena in working class communities (Rainwater, 1960) and these couples seem to regard pregnancy as something which decided the matter for them rather than as a discrete decision situation.

Clearly, though, the existence of legal abortion made it more difficult for these young women to press their boyfriends into marriage and, as a consequence, they have become more negative about the option. Legal abortion represented, in short, a threat to their definition of their pregnancy as marriage and forced them to cling fiercely to their definition of motherhood as pre-emptive. In response, they developed an ideology which might be called protest motherhood to justify their own choice in the face of alternate definitions.

Single Motherhood

Roughly one quarter of the women who carried an unplanned pregnancy to term were single at the time of delivery. Virtually all of these women were under twenty and many were teenagers; single motherhood is largely the choice of young women (Hartley, 1975; Presser, 1974). Indeed, despite access to legal abortion, the rate of out-of-wedlock births among young women seems to be increasing and teenagers still comprise about half of all those who report "illegitimate" births (Presser, 1974; Jaffe and Dryfoos, 1976).

Why are young women, particulary women under the age of eighteen unwilling to seek abortions? There are many reasons for this pattern, but perhaps the most important of these revolve around the unique status of adolescents. For example, in Hawaii, during the time that these interviews were being conducted, teenagers had to seek adult consent to obtain either effective contraception or abortion. This legislation clearly had the consequende of delaying diagnosis of pregnancy. In this study, nearly one out of every eleven adolescents had their pregnancy diagnosed so late in gestation -- twenty one weeks or more -- that abortion was more or less eliminated as an option.

But what of the rest of these young women? The costs of teenaged motherhood are certainly clear - interrupted education, divorce, welfare dependency and poverty have all been linked to early childbearing (Bacon, 1974: Furstenberg, 1976). Why, then did these young women carry their pregnancies to term? Was opposition to abortion one of their concerns?

Certainly the group had a negative attitude toward the option. About three quarters of the single mothers were either opposed to abortion or ambivalent about it when the law was passed and remained either opposed to

it or ambivalent about it at the time of their birth (76 percent and 70 percent). These figures certainly confirm Bracken's (1978) findings that teenagers who chose motherhood hold very negative attitudes toward abortion. Furthermore, this group had the largest proportion of women expressing opposition to abortion of any of the women who chose motherhood (35 percent). Most of the other groups had moved from negativity to ambivalence by the time of the interview.

Comments made by many of these women underscore this negative orientation. Said one nineteen year old waitress, "I'm against abortion for all occasions." Another added "I don't like Hawaii's abortion law." Several others said they know "nothing about" either the law or abortion and one said that she thought abortions were"very dangerous" or might have "side effects for women." One seventeen year old expanded on her hostility toward the law by saying, "I don't like it . . . they can get it when they want it and people can get it if they can afford it. If they didn't want to get pregnant, they shouldn't have sex. I didn't want it to be passed."

Their clear hostility toward the option of abortion was, however, not grounded in moral opposition to the practice but rather to the fact that in many of the these pregnancies, someone in the decision-making network (frequently the boyfriend) brought up the idea of abortion, and particulary among the older women, the existence of legal and safe abortion meant that their boyfriends refused to marry them.

The pregnancy of an eighteen year old Pilipino women who said she was "engaged" illustrates this clearly. "My boyfriend and his family hinted at abortion being the best thing" she remembered, but "I wouldn't have an abortion." "My boyfriend left it up to me but really he wanted me to have an abortion." Apparently, after refusing to marry her, her boyfriend now

indicated that he wanted to "enjoy the baby." Her reaction to this was angry, "He doesn't want to accept any responsibility, but now he wants to enjoy the baby." Asked if her choice had made any changes in her life, she said yes, "Before I used to put /him/ first, now he disgusts me with the change."

Another woman was slightly less hostile in her account. "He suggested abortion and said he would pay for it but it was up to me." The subject then hastened to clarify this by saying, "He was happy about the baby . . . he only suggested abortion if I wanted it . . . he didn't have a job." Clearly some boyfriends now feel that the existence of legal abortion absolves them of the time worn responsibility to do the honorable thing and offer marriage. Yet these women desired motherhood strongly enough to seek that role transition without marriage. In traditionally female jobs, motherhood with or without marriage looked good.

The failure of some of the younger women to seek marriage along with motherhood was explained by another pattern; they could not afford marriage. Even if they were in continuing relationships with young men, their age made it unlikely that either they or their boyfriends could earn enough money to support a family. Consequently, both they and, in most cases, their parents accepted motherhood without marriage. Unhappy or bored at school and facing dim employment options, these young women saw motherhood, supported in many cases by welfare, as an attractive option. They were all quite happy to be mothers with or without marriage and their families were accepting of this alternative. Indeed, in some cases parents blocked marriage saying that the young people were "too young." Said one girl, "I wanted to get married at first, but my father advised us not to."

For almost all of these young women, motherhood with or without marriage, was a pre-emptive status. This explains why they, when queried about what

they would advise other women facing an unplanned pregnancy, consistently sought ways to avoid advising abortion. Often over 80 percent of the single mothers routinely advised the woman to have the baby or gave mixed advice, though a quarter of the older women did advise abortion in the case of a high school girl (See Table Three, p. 9).

Younger women were not willing to give this advice, however; "She should have it, cause I was pregnant when I was in high school" said one young woman. Another sixteen year old part-Hawaiian woman was even more explicit saying "She should have it and keep it. /I would/ slap her head, everyone should want babies."

In general, the single mother rejects abortion because of her commitment to the pre-emptive nature of motherhood and not because of abstract moral principles regarding abortion. Motherhood within or outside of marriage, is seen as a very desirable status and many of these young women anxiously awaited the adulthood and maturity they imagined it would confer. For those young women whose definition of their pregnancy as marriage was frustrated by the existence of legal abortion, however, single motherhood was a "fall back" position. Their hostility toward abortion is more immediate and angry as its existence frustrated the realization of their goals. For many of the others, though, the rejection of abortion was more directly motivated by a desire to justify the high social and emotional costs associated with the choice of single motherhood.

MOTHERHOOD POSTPONED: ABORTION AND ADOPTION

For many years, it has been assumed that women who sought abortion were simply employing a technology to avoid a totally unwanted pregnancy (Miller, 1974; Hass, 1974). When abortion was illegal, this may well have been the case since only the most determined and courageous of women could brave the experience (Lee, 1969).

In the post-legal, pre-Hyde, situation, however, this was not the case. Roughly a quarter (22 percent) of all nulliparous women and a little less than half (43 percent) of those experiencing an unplanned conception sought to avoid motherhood by seeking abortion. (See Table Three) For some of these women, abortion was the only option they considered after discovering their pregnancies. For others, the decision to seek an abortion was quite complex.

Ambivalent Abortion

About half of the women who sought abortion were ambivalent about their choice. Middle class students in marriage orientated relationships two thirds said they were either "going steady" or "engaged" to the man involved in their pregnancy. Their confusion about the meaning of their pregnancy was largely a consequence of the enormous cultural pressure on women in marriage oriented couples to accommodate themselves to unplanned pregnancy.

Attitudes toward unplanned pregnancy were not, however, affected by the woman's feelings about abortion as some had expected (Hass, 1974). Indeed women who were confused about whether to seek an abortion because they were opposed to the procedure were conspicuously absent. A look at the attitudes toward abortion among this group show that over three quarters(75 percent) were in favor of legal abortion at the time Hawaii's liberal law passed.

At the time of the interview, however, a significant shift toward greater support of abortion had occurred in this group with nearly all (94 percent) saying they supported the law. (See Table Five) / A look at their own pregnancy situations explains much of this shift to greater acceptance of abortion.

For some of these women, their view of the motherhood role was very positive and their own personal preference was to marry and carry their pregnancy to term. This orientation had a definite affect on their views of both their pregnancies and their eventual abortions. One woman, for example, said she was "happy" but scared when she discovered that she was four weeks pregnant: "I never thought it would happen to me . . . getting pregnant and being a mother." Then she said she "got depressed" because she wanted to have the child but realized she could not. Another told the interviewer that if a pill could make her married, she would take it and keep her baby.

Most of these women linked full womanhood with motherhood, and most made comments which indicated that they felt disappointed that this status has been denied them, "Marriage is missing . . . the role of a woman is to produce," said one twenty year old. Another said "what makes me feel like a full woman is raising children." These women indicated that they felt motherhood conferred maturity rather than requiring it and felt ambivalent about their own abortion.

> "I feel like I am killing a human life with a soul. I feel quilty but /it/ will not affect the rest of my life . . . I have grown up and /ām/ experienced. My boyfriend is already mature so he has not changed."
>
> "At first I thought I was losing a part of myself, but after all is said and done I feel it is the best thing."

When, however, the option of forced marriage was rejected by the men involved in their pregnancies or blocked by the young woman's parents, their statements

Table Five: Attitudes Toward Abortion Among Women in the Interview Sample Chosing to Avoid Motherhood

General Attitude Toward Hawaii's Abortion Law	Type of Procedure			
	Adoption N=5	Teenage Abortion N=27	Ambivalent Abortion N=46	Decisive Abortion N=34
When Passed				
For	0 %	50%	80%	88%
Against	20	27	9	12
Ambivalent	80	23	11	0
At time of Interview				
For	20	68	94	92
Against	40	9	3	4
Ambivalent	40	23	3	4
	100 (5)*	100 (22)	100 (35)	100 (25)

*Totals vary because of missing data.

Table Six : Advice to Women in Unplanned Pregnancy Situations by Women Avoiding Motherhood

Types of Situation	Type of Procedure			
	Adoption N=5	Abortion Teenage N=27	Abortion Ambivalent N=46	Abortion Decisive N=34
Married woman who				
"felt she had enough children				
Abortion	20%	44%	29%	78%
Baby	20	26	12	0
Mixed	20	30	59	23
"was not ready to begin her family				
Abortion	0	44	23	54
Baby	20	26	17	12
Mixed	60	30	60	35
Unmarried woman who				
was "going steady"				
Abortion	20	32	20	35
Baby	20	18	11	26
Mixed	40	50	69	26
"would not marry the man who got her pregnant"				
Abortion	20	45	37	65
Baby	20	9	3	4
Mixed	40	45	60	31
"was still in high school"				
Abortion	20	59	43	81
Baby	20	9	0	4
Mixed	40	32	57	15
	100 (4)*	100 (23)	100 (35)	100 (26)

*Totals vary because of missing data.

about abortion reflect the importance with which they viewed this option:

> "The rates for abortion are excellent in Hawaii . . . there should be lower rates for girls where boys walk out."
>
> "The law gives you a choice . . . I didn't care for it then [when it was illegal] but.I will not get into this situation again. I really don't want to go through this once more. I'll think a long time before I do anything again."
>
> "I don't feel one way or the other [about the law] something comes along in society solves suicides and financial difficulties [is] something that needed to be done."

Married women had, it appears, the most difficult time coming to their decisions and probably only sought abortion because they found themselves in extremely unusual situations with regard to their husbands. One woman, for example, had been having an affair with a married man while her husband was out of town. She said, "I thought of several angles, [but] I don't think I can convince my husband it is his." She added, however, that she had "come very close to not having an abortion," "I feel I'm performing a special function by having a tiny clump of cells that's making a human life." Another of these women decided on abortion only because she "thought of being sick and pregnant" and did not want to carry another unwanted pregnancy to term. She had given up another child and only married her husband because her father insisted that she do so.

In about half of these pregnancies, the woman is less strongly inclined to see forced marriage as the only appropriate solution to the dilemma. But these women, too, had been confused by the news that they were pregnant and uncertain about what the pregnancy meant. One of these women, for example, answered a question about whether she had considered marriage by saying, "Not seriously, it just flitted through my mind. [I] just didn't feel like

it . . . /I/ might have kept /the/ child and lived with him but /I/ wouldn't marry him. I might leave him later." Another said that while she loved the man involved and that he "was the kind of guy" she was "looking for," she did not want to marry him:

> "We're not ready . . . I'm not ready . . . /I/ had thought about it before but there was not question about it when I did become pregnant."

These women were significantly less likely to link femininity with womanhood than their counterparts who had wanted the pregnancy to signify marriage. For them, marriage and motherhood were for women who were mature:

> "I think about it /full womanhood/ alot . . . I'm very concerned aoubt whether I'm mature enough to handle the things I do."
>
> "I want babies but not while he's in school and not until /we're/ established . . . maybe in five years."
>
> "I'm still growing."

These women were also more vociferous in their support of Hawaii's abortion law than their more marriage oriented counterparts.

> "I think it is fine. I don't think it should be illegal . . . lucky you live Hawaii. I feel this pregnancy could have happened in Canada, there I would have been stuck."
>
> "It is great. /I/ wish they could have abortion for day patients instead of staying in /the/ hospital."
>
> "If he /the doctor/ hadn't recommended it, I would have gone ahead and had the baby: I thought I had no choice, and when he asked me 'Do you want to have it?' I said, 'You mean I have a choice?'"

However, they too, were ambivalent about their own abortions saying "maybe later on /I/ will wonder what the baby would have been like," "I've decided to feel good about it," or "I'm afraid of the mental part . . . the psychological part afterwards."

The ambivalence with which even these women approached their abortions

is significant. Most of them had considered, or were urged to consider, carrying the pregnancy to term. They were confused as to what their pregnancy meant and considered one definition which involved forced marriage and an early start on a family. Apparently, once the woman entertained this definition of the pregnancy it was much more difficult to choose to terminate it.

For only one woman, however, was abortion per se the source of her confusion about her pregnancy's meaning. This thirty-four year old bookkeeper with a strong Catholic background said she had thought about marrying the man involved in order to "save a life," and added that she considered giving two years of her life. "If I didn't love him I'd get a divorce," she added. She said she had "thought and thought about abortion" because of her feelings but finally decided to have an abortion. "Then I'd still have a chance later to have another child and fall in love," she told the interviewer.

This woman, however, was unique among these abortion patients. Attitudes about abortion do not seem to be the product of abstract and immutable moral positions. They are, rather, inextricably tied up in the woman's definition of her pregnancy. For these ambivalent women, abortion was instrumental once marriage was no longer an option. Their ambivalence shows up however, when they are asked what they would have done if abortion had been illegal. All of these women said they would have had the baby and either kept it or given it up:

> "I would have had the baby by myself without marriage."
>
> "Since I couldn't afford to return to the mainland, I would have had the baby and kept it."
>
> "I would have gone some place to have the child."

None of these women mentioned trying to obtain an illegal abortion, and, prior to the era of legal abortion, most would probably have sought a forced marriage.

Indeed, this must explain the absence of middle class women among those who resolved their unplanned pregnancies by marriage despite earlier research findings that this option was frequently employed by the middle class (Coombs and Freedman, 1970).

When asked what they would advise other women confronting an unplanned pregnancy, however, about half of this group avoided giving advice saying things like women should "see a doctor," "consult other," see her parents One woman's comments summed up therse feelings quite accurately, "If she's planning to get married, she should have it, if not and she doesn't want it, [she should] have an abortion." Another said "[She should] think it over and decide if she wants to tell him - - if she wants to get married ok, if not, she should have an abortion." (See Table Six)

In essence, these women were aware of the difficulty of their own decision process and their feelings that if their situations had been different they would have gotten married and had the baby.

These women had, however, become more liberal on the general idea of abortion confirming other research which indicated that women who obtained abortions tended to hold more liberal attitudes toward the option than women who had not had that experience (Evans, Selstad, and Welcher, 1976; Bracken, Klerman and Bracken, 1978; Bogen, 1974). Commenting on these findings, Bogen suggested that "once a woman has had an abortion, her attitude changes toward being more liberal in order to reduce the conflict or ambiguity that might be experienced if she continued to have conservative attitudes" (Bogen, 1974: 103).

In another important study Freeman (1978) found much of the same pattern of ambivalence among women who sought abortions and adds an important point. She discovered that among her respondents 37 percent said that they had "been certain they would never have an abortion" and an additional 13 percent had not known whether they would be able to make the decision for abortion.

Freeman concluded that "for many, the abortion decision contradicted their perceptions about themselves." Elaborating on this point she noted that for many of her respondents abortion was a difficult solution to a pregnancy perceived as an insurmountable problem - though not necessarily regarded as unwanted" (Freeman, 1978: 155). This pattern was clearly in evidence in this group. Possessing traditional attitudes toward motherhood, these middle class students sought abortion only because marriage to their boyfriends was not possible.

Teenage Abortion

Teenage women who sought abortion were in situation where a unique decision-making process had to occur. As a result of legislation which required these young women to seek parental consent for their abortions many of these young women delayed telling their parents they were pregnant and were confused about their abortions. Only half of the teenage women who sought abortions favored the abortion law at its passage (50 percent), though by the time of their own abortion over two thirds (68 percent) said they favored legal abortion. Most teenagers, then, like their older counterparts tended to move away from their conservative attitudes once they had an abortion. Evans, Selstad, and Welcher (1976) found a similar pattern in California were teenagers who had sought abortion had a more liberal attitude toward abortion than their counterparts who had carried unplanned pregnancies to term, but the degree of support is still far lower than that found among older abortion patients.

To understand teenage abortion it must be understood that it is in large part a parentally organized response to the age old problem of pre-marital pregnancy. Previous to legalized abortion these same parents would have probably sought out other mechanisms to resolve the dilemma - - an illegal abortion, a hastily organized marriage or an extended visit with a relative. Middle class families are clear about the consequence of early marriage and do not even consider unwed motherhood. Both they and their children are much more clearly future oriented and concerned about school and future career. Even when this commitment is not present in the young woman, herself, it is present in her parents.

The extent to which the teenage woman shared her parents definition of her pregnancy had a direct affect on her expressed attitudes toward abortion.

About a third of the young women in this interview sample shared their parents negative view of their pregnancy (though they may have delayed telling their parents they were pregnant because they were embarrassed). As a consequence, they sounded quite like their older counterparts in their general attitudes toward abortion:

> "I would have had one in California but more of a rigamarole in California."
>
> "It's just like another operation."
>
> "I'm glad it's over."
>
> "I considered abortion when I thought I was pregnant before the doctor told me."

Another third of the teenagers, often younger girls, were more passive in the decision-making process which led to their abortions (saying things like "My family thought abortion was best" and "My mother said /I/ better wait for marriage and told me to have an abortion"). Their orientation toward their abortion was best expressed by one comment, "I felt I had hurt my mother so I didn't mind having an abortion." They were not necessarily positive about abortion, but viewed it as a less unpleasant consequence of their indiscretion than the ordeal of telling their parents they were pregnant: "Everything will be alright when it's over," said one. Another said that her abortion "will put more sense in my head," and a third said, "I'm glad it's over, /I/ learned a lesson - - stay away from servicemen." There is evidence that parents were encouraging the definition of the abortion as a sort of punishment for sexual activity in the hope that the experience would discourage further experimentation. As the comments indicate, there is some evidence that this was working: "I feel I don't want intercourse again," said one seventeen year old, "my mother is giving up alot for me . . . I feel bad about the money."

Slightly less than a third of the teenagers who were having abortions were not entirely happy with the decision to terminate their pregnancies. Their reluctance stemmed from two different sources; roughly half of these young women had initially defined their pregnancies as instrumental because they would allow them to enter the motherhood role:

> "I really want to have it, but /I/ can't because of /my/ parents."
>
> "It's OK that the boy split, because it's still mine."
>
> "I would like to have the baby if I could raise it myself."
>
> "I wanted to run away from him and live with /the/ guy who said he'd support me and the kid on the mainland."

or as a mechanism for achieving a desired marriage:

> "I left it up to him 'cause he had to support it. I really wanted to have the baby."

These young women experience themselves as passive and reluctant components of a decision-making process dominated by the wishes of others. Most of the pregnancies are parentally organized abortions, and all the girls' comments in these interviews tend to be infused with dissatisfaction and anger about the decision-making process and their abortions:

> "I'm scared /of abortion/. I wanted to keep the baby but it would be too hard."
>
> "I feel I am a murderer."
>
> "I feel I am killing someone."

These negative comments must, however, be placed within the larger legal framework which can cast pregnancy decision-making into a battle between parents and errant youth. Clearly, though, some teenagers resented abortion for having denied them the adult status they imagined motherhood would confer. For most teenagers, however, abortion was a welcome if regrettable conclusion to contraceptive risk taking.

Adoption and Abortion

Adoption is apparently declining as a mechanism for handling unplanned pregnancies. In California, for example Sklar and Berkov (1974) report that "the proportion of illegitimate children adopted declined from 30 percent in 1967 and 1968 to about 15 percent in 1971 and 1972." While comparable post-law figures are not available, only about 2 percent of the women who became pregnant in Hawaii after legal abortion become an option chose to give their children up for adoption.

Why, though, did these women elect this as a resolution of their unplanned pregnancies? Was opposition to abortion an element in their choice? Since three out of five women in this sample who gave their children up for adoption had come to Hawaii from states where abortion was still illegal, this study can supply only a partial answer to this question. Significantly, though, all but one of these women said that they had "thought about abortion," but it was either illegal where they lived or their pregnancies were discovered so late in gestation that it was no longer an option; ("I thought about abortion but it was not possible in Nebraska," "If abortion had been legal in Chicago, I probably would have had one but I was past the stage of abortion by the time I got here."

While two of these five women expressed some ambivalence about releasing their babies for adoption, only one expressed opposition to abortion. Even this woman had delayed telling anyone of her pregnancy in the hope that her boyfriend would marry her. The only Catholic in the group, she would have clearly welcomed a forced marriage. The other woman, a sixteen year old from Virginia simply said that after giving birth she "loved" her baby and wanted to keep it.

These youthful women were predominantly ambivalent though wistful about

the general idea of abortion (with only one out of the five clearly favoring the law and three ambivalent about it). There were also reluctant to counsel abortion to others facing an unplanned pregnancy. One twenty year old waitress said, for example, "I had thought about abortion before /I/ got pregnant but once /I/ was pregnant my feelings change. /I/ doubt whether I would have had an abortion if I could have had one." Another fifteen year old student said, "I don't know much about it /legal abortion/ but my impression is that it is too liberal given without counseling and advice." Clearly, though, these women rejected forced marriage or single motherhood as well. "She should consider /the/ responsibility of raising the child and /the/ attitudes that might result in the people she knows." Another nineteen year old who had hoped for a forced marriage said, "If she wants the baby, have it, if she has a boyfriend . . . /but if/ she doesn't have a boyfriend then she should give it up for adoption."

Clearly, many of these women were trying to justify the very high social costs associated with their choice by being less than enthusiastic about abortion. And the costs had been high for most of these young women. They had experienced disruption of their lives, strained relationships with their boyfriends and parents, the physical drain of gestation, and the stigma of unwed pregnancy without the offsetting anticipation of motherhood. They had not carried their pregnancies to term because of a moral objection to abortion but rather because of indecision or the inability to consider it.

Decisive Abortion

Women who sought abortion without hesitation constituted slightly less than half of these who made this choice. Many were single women who were engaged in contraceptive risk taking and "got caught" and others were middle class women in continuing relationships whose cultural commitment to planning over-rode pronatalist pressures.

Women who "got caught" had been in the early stages of sexual relationships where contraceptive risk taking is essentially normative (Lindemann, 1974; Luker, 1975). These women were clear that abortion was inevitable once they discovered they were pregnant. They were sure that the pregnancies were unwanted and unequivocal that abortion was the appropriate solution to their problem. One eighteen year old student, for example, said that when she discovered she was pregnant she "thought only of abortion." She felt abortion was "not to be worried about," and did not consider marriage to the man involved because she "didn't know him that well" and "wasn't ready to get married. When asked what she did after she discovered she was pregnant, she answered simply "I told them [her family and friends] that I was pregnant and was going to have an abortion." Her matter-of-fact dicussion of her situation was echoed in other interviews with these single women.

A twenty-two year old typist, who had not been using birth control because she just started intercourse with a new boyfriend, said she had "expected" the news that she was pregnant. She only considered abortion ("that's all") and told the interviewer that her major "hassle" was financial. She mater-of-factly told the man about the pregnancy ("He asked, 'what's the matter?' I told him I hadn't felt well") and had an abortion at four weeks gestation.

Other women echoed this decisive pattern:

> "I knew the minute I was told I was pregnant."
>
> "I had made my mind up already . . . I knew when I found out I was pregnant that I could have an abortion."

and none of them experienced any problem with the idea of abortion:

> "I don't feel bad about it . . . [I] feel it's neccessary in our society."
>
> "[the law] is good but the restriction should be lowered so that it could be cheaper for women on welfare."
>
> "It's not to be worried about."

Decisive single women saw their only option as marriage, and they did not want to marry the man involved in their pregnancies. Obviously, for women in continuing relationships, marriage was a greater possibility and yet over half of the decisive women were in these situations. These women, most of whom had had difficulty with one or more of the "effective" methods of contraception, were decisive in their rejection of pregnancy because either they understood that childbearing involved responsibilities that they did not feel capable of fulfilling:

> "It's not fair to bring a child into a situation when I don't know what I want. I don't know if I want to drop out [not live in the U.S. anymore]. [I'm] thinking about moving to Canada and becoming an activist."
>
> "It's the wrong time to get pregnant. It is totally against my ethics to raise a child in any civilized situation . . . noise and pressure to conform . . . because that is what is expected of children."

or because it involved a disruption of their career or lifestyle:

> "My living situation is unstable . . . [I] travel all over and I don't know if I will stay here or not. I would like to have a child, but [it] doesn't fit with my type of living."
>
> "I like my job and I don't want to have a baby or get married."

"I have no intention of having children now. I don't know about the future."

"I wanted to finish school."

"I have a two year contract with the music business . . . you can't raise a child on the road."

Some of the couples who were living together rejected the pregnancy precisely because it meant marriage, and they were either reluctant or hostile to the idea of getting married:

"I didn't think about it [marriage] in a positive sense . . . if we were over fifty it might be OK, but I'm too young."

"It would be nice to be married. My parents would like it . . . maybe some day . . . maybe not . . . it seems to be long term raltionship. It's as if we're married [but about the baby I'm] not very pleased . . . it's not a good time to have a child. Neither of us is ready . . . I'm not ready even if he is."

"Our arrangement is good the way it is. Marriage is a trap for alot of people. We decided we didn't want marriage [the pregnancy] didn't change our mind about marriage not being right for us."

Committed women in more conventional relationships (engaged or married) were less likely to fall into this decisive category. Those who do appear are largely middle class women who have a strong commitment to planning and, as a consequence, they reject either the idea of forced marriage:

"I want to marry him, but not because I'm pregnant."

"I don't want to get married just because I am pregnant. I am the youngest child so Chinese style I have the largest wedding . . . one of my sisters had to get married and I don't want to repeat that."

"I don't want to marry him right now. I want to finish school and he needs to decide on his career. He just fininshed at Stanford."

the idea of beginning their marriage with a child:

> "It's not the right time to have a baby . . . [we want] to wait until we are more settled. [We] plan to move to Mexico and start a business . . . also want to travel so this is not a good time to have a baby."
>
> "We don't want to get married this way. [We] wanted a planned family and after we're married I want time with my husband alone before having children."

or the idea of an unplanned first birth:

> "We both felt rushed into the pregnancy. He wants to go back to school after one more year of service [and] we want to plan our children."
>
> "We had wanted a baby a few years ago, but then [we] decided not to . . . we had too many other things to do."
>
> "The abortion allowed us to finish school and go to Germany."

The view of abortion among these committed women is instrumental and their characterizations of their own abortions reflects this orientation:

> "I had to get the abortion quickly as I was going to New Zealand and they don't have them there."
>
> "It's just an accident. It is too bad it happened."
>
> "I have not feeling . . . it felt like an infection to be removed."
>
> "Abortion was inevitable in Hawaii."
>
> "I feel indifferent because it is all been arranged so I have stopped worrying."
>
> "Get me to a doctor quick."

That the woman's attitude toward abortion was affected by her specific situation is clear from the responses of a few of these decisive women who were admittedly opposed to abortion in the abstract. "I was worried about taking a life, but I am not going to let that affect me," said a twenty-three year old Catholic. Another said, "it

made me sick to think about the abortion, but it is better than the kid having a lousy life."

But this woman was unique, almost all of these women (88 percent) had supported Hawaii's abortion law at the time it was past and at the time of the interview (92 percent). These figures represent one of the highest rates of approval among any of the woman facing the motherhood decision, but ironically they are followed by those women who deliberately planned to become mothers (81 percent of whom favored legal abortion).

These decisive women were also more likely than their ambivalent counterparts to explicitly advise others confronting an unplanned pregnancy to consider abortion particularly when the woman was not in a continuing relationship with a man. Over three quarters approved of abortion for a pregnant high school woman or a married woman with as many children as she wanted and 65 percent approved of it for the woman who did not want to marry. (See Table Six)

Interestingly, however, this group was ambivalent about advising abortion for women who were characterized as "going steady" (35 percent) or married with no children (54 percent). Even they placed great importance on the woman's situation vis a vis the man involved in her pregnancy.

Comments expanding on this advice underscored this groups commitment to planning and to the significance of the woman's choice on her future:

> "She should make up her own mind [about] whether to get married or have the baby or abortion."
>
> "If [she] didn't want to be pregnant [I] would advice abortion."

"I don't think I'd advise her [but] I'd give her my experience."

"It depends on [her] circumstances. [I] would recommend abortion but I would never push anyone into it."

It is clear form these comments that these women did not regard their abortion decision as an unimportant or lighthearted one. They made their own choice carefully and urged others to weight their own options.

Among both the single and committed women in this group, many had the option of marriage and legitimate childbearing. Their consistent and decisive rejection of this option reveals a major difference between their view of the motherhood role and the view held by women who chose single motherhood or forced marriage. These women see motherhood as a role one enters when she is ready to assume the responsibilities involved and capable of enjoying the child's development. Even when marriage was an option or anticipated in the near future, these women were unwilling to drift into unplanned motherhood.

They had not defined their pregnancies as potential children but "accidents" and, as a consequence, had little difficulty with their own abortions. For them, the ability to care for the child. For these women, motherhood is a choice for which one plans rather than a biological event which dictates the shape of ones life.

CONCLUSION

Women who chose to enter the motherhood role do so largely because both their objective situations and their orientations towards the motherhood role push them in that direction. As the elements of the woman's situation (vis-a-vis marriage, life cycle, and career) drift

away from the ideal, then the strenth of her own commitment to motherhood regardless of its timing or costs must increase if she is to carry her pregnancy to term.

But her orientation alone is not sufficient, for women do not make decisions about unplanned pregnancies in a social vacuum. For a woman to enter the motherhood role in a normative fashion (i.e. get married), she must involve the man involved in her pregnancy and often two sets of parents in the social negotiations which determine the pregnancy's meaning.

Clearly, these interviews reveal that decisions as important and socially significant as marriage and parenthood are not made based solely on approval or disapproval of abortion. A genuine pregnancy means that major and long term changes will occur in the life of the woman making the decision and often in the lives of those around her as well.

Negotiations which determine the definition of the situation seem to revolve initially around the pregnancy's planning status. An event which is planned is one whose meaning is defined. For women who planned to become pregnant, their perceptions of abortion are relatively remote from their own experience and tend to reflect their broader orientation to the motherhood role.

In unplanned conceptions, however, the option of legal abortion does play an important role in the definition of the pregnancy's meaning. As this paper has shown, the strong pro-natalist norms built into the female sex role encourage women to accommodate themselves to unplanned motherhood, but there are other aspects of reality which operate against this cultural press toward motherhood. The most significant of these are the constellation of norms which condemn "unwed" motherhood and "illegitimate" birth.

It appears, for example, that virtually all married women who

experience unplanned pregnancies carry them to term. Pre-marital pregnancy is, however, more complex, and social class begins to play an increasingly large role in the decision-making in these situations. It may be that working and lower class women simply find themselves in situations where the option of carrying an unplanned pre-marital conception to term is more viable and acceptable.

These women often find themselves pregnant at an age, and in situations, where there is little reason either for themselves or their boyfriends to avoid marriage. Neither are students, frequently the male is working and the female is anxious for marriage and motherhood. Further, in these communities, drift into marriage is completely acceptable (Rainwater, 1960), and there is no cultural objection to "unplanned" events or starting a family quickly.

In cases of single motherhood, the affect of situational variables which selectively encourage accommodation to "unwed" motherhood is clear. Among younger lower class women, this option is an attractive one since it permits them to secure welfare assistance. Additionally, within their particular social milieu this strategy is accepted as a social concession to the economic realities. The young woman's parents frequently block marriage, encouraging the young couple to wait until they can afford respectability.

It is clear, though, that even among women who decided to carry their unplanned pregnancies to term, the availability of legal abortion was felt. Not only does the woman have to contend with her own socialization which condemns pre-marital sexuality and pregnancy, she must concern herself with these attitudes among others whose feelings are often critical to the eventual meaning of her pregnancy. If she is

committed, as many of these women were, to the notion that pregnancy means motherhood, she was under substantial pressure to convince others of this definition and to avoid the definition of the pregnancy as a "mistake" to be rectified by abortion.

Essentially, the more lodged the woman was in a stable relationship, the less difficulty she had in defining the pregnancy as meaning motherhood. If she were married, for example, the social pressure is considerable to have the child and there is little social support for alternative definitions. Unmarried women in continuing marriage-oriented relationships had slightly more difficulty and frequently someone in their network of significant others would bring the idea of abortion into the situation. Finally, unmarried single women could expect to have someone seriously suggest that they consider abortion. In general, the more deviant the woman's situation in light of norms condemning "unwed" motherhood, the more intense her negative characterization of abortion.

A pattern of attitudes toward abortion and motherhood developed among these respondents that was not unlike that found by Festinger and his associates in their study of members of a "doomsday group" (1956). He noted that when his respondents experienced embarrassment for their beliefs, they tended to become even more committed to their beliefs. Much of the same sort of pattern appears here. Essentially, these women tended to become even more committed to traditional motherhood and more strongly opposed to abortion as the pressure mounted to alter their commitment to the pregnancy and the cost of such definition increased. Undoubtedly, the feeling that one should accommodate motherhood, even "unwed motherhood," had been costly to these women.

Perhaps in response to this and in an effort to reduce post-decision cognitive dissonance these women were much more negative in their condemnation of abortion than their counterparts who were carrying planned pregnancies to term.

Among women who eventually rejected the motherhood role, the strength of norms which encourage women to accommodate themselves to unplanned pregnancy is also quite apparent. Many of these women considered definitions of their pregnancies which involved birth, but in their case others failed to confirm this definition of the situation. The existence of abortion has clearly meant that some women who held traditional attitudes about the pre-emptiveness of motherhood and wanted to carry their pregnancy to term could not do so because of the failure of others to confirm this definiton of the situation. In some cases, parents insisted on abortion and blocked forced marriage or single motherhood and in others the refusal of the man involved to suggest marriage was instrumental in the woman's choice of abortion.

The existence of these women in the abortion group might explain why Diamond, et al. (1973) found that the women who claimed "I would be neither happy nor unhappy to have this baby" chose abortions with almost the same frequency as women who said that they were "unhappy" to be pregnant. These women held a view of the motherhood role which had encouraged them to consider carrying the pregnancy to term, but in their case they could neither rely on a cultural view which accepted "unplanned" events nor could they expect social support for single motherhood.

Other unmarried, middle class womenmight well have undergone forced marriage in the pre-legal situation, but with the availability

of legal abortion theywere less willing to disrupt their own future plans or those of their boyfriends. Significantly, many of these women were students who were dating other students; and it is this role, with its implied dependence, which plays a major part in many of these decisions.

These women report a clear shift toward a more positive attitude toward abortion. It is possible, as some (Bogen, 1974) have suggested, that this is a result of their efforts to justify their choice, but it seems equally likely that to suppose that they underwent a genuine attitude change as a result of their own difficult decision-making experience. These women held traditional views about motherhood, reported to the interviewers that they were quite ambivalent about their own abortions, but they were now better able to understand why other women might have to seek abortions. As Bracken commented on this subject, "Attitudes toward abortions are changes by one's experience of it" (Bracken, 1978: 261).

At the extreme end, there are women who chose abortion without a second thought. It should be noted that these decisive women are well outside networks which may have had more conventional opinions. They are often older, single women or women cohabiting with men. Their situations as well as a cultural commitment to planning, may have played a role in the ability to reject unplanned motherhood so decisively. Certainly, these women reported themselves as being very positively inclined toward the option of abortion prior to their pregnancies and, as a consequence, did not undergo a change in their attitudes.

Essentially, the more seriously the woman had attempted to defino

the pregnancy as a potential child, the more difficult it was at the time of the procedure to extract herself from this previous definition. On the other hand, the more decisive the woman in the rejection of her pregnancy, the less difficulty she had with the idea of abortion.

Finally, it is clear that the option of legal abortion is having a dramatic impact on female pregnancy decision-making. It is rapidly restructuring the traditional system for responding to unplanned pregnancy. Certainly, too, its existence has affected the situations of women who chose to give birth and this impact should not be overlooked. The existence of legal abortion has made it more difficult for who desired the older, conventional resolutions of pregnancy to convince others of this definition of the situation. Women and networks who view motherhood as morally pre-emptive event (either because those who have sex should experience pregnancy or because motherhood is woman's calling) can expect to find less support for this perspective than previously.

More importantly, women who prior to legal abortion had no safe way of avoiding birth will no longer be forced into unwanted childbearing. This ability to chose will have significant long term consequences for these women as the financial and social costs of single motherhood, forced marriage and, early childbearing are well documented. But more importantly, this ability to plan signals a reduction in the importance of motherhood in defining the direction of a woman's life. Women can now move to restructuring the institution of motherhood from a biological event around which every other aspect of their existence revolves to one of many very meaningful and important experiences in life from which women can chose.

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